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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Third session
6-17 May 1996
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Activities of the United Nations system in the field of water and mineral resources, and inter-agency coordination focusing on progress made towards achieving sustainable development.

4. Review of progress on water-related issues:

   (a) Regional and global information on the state of the world's freshwater resources;

   (b) Institutional and legal issues in water resource management.

5. Review of implementation plans for averting the freshwater crisis.

6. Future water resources management issues and the strategies and policies that the international community should be considering in response.

7. Inflow of funds and new technologies in the mineral sector of developing countries and economies in transition:

   (a) Complementarity between the roles and obligations of investors and involved parties of host countries considering the intrinsic value of mineral deposits and accrued benefits;

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(b) Socio-economic aspects of the privatization of State-owned mineral assets.

8. New global and regional approaches on mineral resource assessment and the role of the United Nations system:

(a) Integration of existing information on mineral resource potential so as to develop a global understanding;

(b) Interregional workshop to formulate a pilot project in developing standard approaches to the identification and assessment of permissive mineral tracts.

9. Developments in small-scale mining.

10. Environmental protection and restoration issues arising from mineral industry activities.

11. Integration of the issue of the sustainable supply of minerals into the United Nations processes for addressing Agenda 21.

12. Provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Committee.

13. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session.

Annotations

1. Election of officers

In accordance with rule 26 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Council, shall elect its officers. As in the previous session, the Committee may wish to elect five officers, namely, a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The provisional agenda and documentation for the third session of the Committee were approved by the Economic and Social Council in decision 1994/308.

The proposed organizational arrangements for the work of the Committee, as approved by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1992/62, are set out below.

In addition to the items concerning the election of officers and the adoption of the agenda (items 1 and 2), issues related to activities of the United Nations system in the field of water and mineral resources, and inter-agency coordination focusing on progress made towards achieving sustainable development (item 3) will be dealt with in plenary meetings. Following the discussion of these items, the Committee will break up into two working groups: the Working Group on Water Resources (to discuss items 4, 5

and 6) and the Working Group on Mineral Resources (to discuss items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). Items 12 and 13 will be considered in plenary meetings.

3. Activities of the United Nations system in the field of water and mineral resources, and inter-agency coordination focusing on progress made towards achieving sustainable development

Documentation

Separate reports of the Secretary-General on water and mineral resources, respectively, focusing on progress made towards achieving sustainable development, describing the coordination and integration of activities of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and focusing also on changes made by the United Nations in response to Agenda 21 and on the success of programmes in meeting the goals set

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on its activities in the fields of water and mineral resources and the identification of new and future uses to which remote-sensing technology and data sets can be applied in the mineral and water sectors in Asia and the Pacific

The requested report of the Secretary-General identifying new and future uses to which remote-sensing technology and data sets can be applied in the mineral and water sectors has been cancelled due to budgetary constraints and the decentralization of expertise to the regional commissions.

4. Review of progress on water-related issues:

(a) Regional and global information on the state of the world's freshwater resources:

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the state of the world's freshwater resources

Notes by the Secretary-General transmitting separate regional reports by the regional commissions on progress made and issues arising in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan and the water-related recommendations of Agenda 21

(b) Institutional and legal issues in water resource management.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on consideration of institutional and legal issues in water resources management, with specific attention to countries in tropical and water-scarce areas

5. Review of implementation plans for averting the freshwater crisis

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the preparation of implementation plans for averting the freshwater crisis

6. Future water resources management issues and the strategies and policies that the international community should be considering in response

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the inter-sessional strategy paper of the Committee on future water resources management issues and appropriate strategies and policies

7. Inflow of funds and new technologies in the mineral sector of developing countries and economies in transition:

(a) Complementarity between the roles and obligations of investors and involved parties of host countries considering the intrinsic value of mineral deposits and accrued benefits;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General covering the assessment of benefits accruing to host countries from the inflow of funds and technology for mineral development, taking into account the intrinsic value of mineral deposits, with a view to providing guidance on mechanisms that would allow complementarity between the roles and obligations of investors and host Governments, all aiming at the sustainability of development

(b) Socio-economic aspects of the privatization of State-owned mineral assets.

Documentation

The requested oral report on the status of the study incorporating inputs from the United Nations system, as well as from other sources, on the socio-economic implications of the privatization of State-owned mineral assets, with particular reference to future mineral investment (including an assessment of changes in living standards and the identification of possible remedial measures, and ways and means to establish a dialogue involving all parties concerned, e.g., Governments, local communities, trade unions and investors) will not be presented due to the lack of necessary resources available to conduct the study. With the exception of a brief summary of its activities in this area submitted by the Economic Commission for Africa, no other contributions were received

8. New global and regional approaches to mineral resource assessment and the role of the United Nations system:

(a) Integration of existing information on mineral resource potential so as to develop a global understanding;

Documentation

The requested oral report on the preparation of a plan for the integration of existing information on mineral resource potential collected by the United Nations system, other organizations and Member States, on an ongoing basis so as to develop a global understanding will not be presented due to the lack of necessary resources available to prepare the plan. With the exception of a submission from ESCAP, no other contributions were received.

(b) Interregional workshop to formulate a pilot project in developing standard approaches to the identification and assessment of permissive mineral tracts.

Documentation

The requested oral report on the status of an interregional workshop to formulate a pilot project (for an appropriate region) which should develop standard approaches to the identification and qualitative assessment of permissive tracts and be based on geographical information system technology, that would allow integration with other land management information will not be presented due to the current financial situation of the United Nations, which has prevented the workshop from being financed and prepared.

9. Developments in small-scale mining

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on small-scale mining, including a quantitative evaluation of its importance in the economies of developing countries and economies in transition (including an analysis of new approaches and developments focused on the role of local communities, the role of the private sector and the flow of foreign capital and the creation of joint ventures, and highlighting recent results obtained in some new areas of activity, such as building material, mineral waters and geothermal waters)

10. Environmental protection and restoration issues arising from mineral industry activities

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on key advances in the development and application of state-of-the art technology for minimizing the environmental degradation caused by the mining and processing of mineral resources (including information on the reprocessing of wastes and tailings and the

elimination of negative ecological consequences of the past activities of mineral enterprises)

11. Integration of the issue of the sustainable supply of minerals into the United Nations processes for addressing Agenda 21

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the inter-sessional strategy paper of the Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Towards the sustainable supply of minerals in the context of Agenda 21"

12. Provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Committee

The provisional agenda for the fourth session will be drafted on the basis of the Committee's deliberations and recommendations.

Documentation

Draft provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Committee

13. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session

The Committee will adopt its report to the Economic and Social Council.